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A

DECLARATION

OF THE

FAITH and ORDER

Owned and Practiſed

IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN

ENGLAND:

Agreed upon and conſented unto

By their

ELDERS and MESSENGERS

IN

Their Meeting at the *SAVOY*,

October 12. 1658.

LONDON,

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1659.

A PREFACE.

CONfeſſion of the *Faith* that is in us, when juſtly called for, is ſo indiſpenſable a due all owe to the Glory of the Soveraign GOD, that it is ranked among the Duties of the firſt Commandment, ſuch as Prayer is; and therefore by *Paul* yoaked with Faith it ſelf, as neceſſary to ſalvation: *With the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſſe, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* Our Lord Chriſt himſelf, when he was accuſed of his Doctrine conſidered ſimply as a matter of fact by preaching, refuſed to anſwer; becauſe, as ſuch, it lay upon evidence, and matter of teſtimony of others; unto whom therefore he refers himſelf: But when both the High Prieſt and *Pilate* expoſtulate his Faith, and what he held himſelf to be; he without any demur at all, cheerfully makes declaration, That he *was the Son of GOD*; ſo to the *High Prieſt*: And that he was a *King*, and *born to be a King*; thus to *Pilate*; though upon the uttering of it his life lay at the ſtake: Which holy profeſſion of his is celebrated for our example, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13.

Confeſſion, when *made by a company* of profeſſors of Chriſtianity jointly meeting to that end the moſt genuine and, natural uſe of ſuch *Confeſſions* is, That under the ſame form of words, they expreſſe the ſubſtance of the ſame *common ſalvation*, or *unity of their faith*; whereby *ſpeaking the ſame things*, *they ſhew themſelves perfectly joyned in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgement.* 1 Cor. 1. 10.

And accordingly ſuch a tranſaction is to be looked upon but as a meet or fit *medium* or *means* whereby to expreſſe *that* their *common faith and ſalvation*, and no way to be made uſe of as an *impoſition* upon any: Whatever is of force or conſtraint in matters of this nature, cauſeth them to degenerate from the *name* and *nature* of *Confeſſions*, and turns them from being *Confeſſions of Faith*, into *exactions* and *impoſitions of Faith.*

And ſuch *Common Confeſſions* of the Orthodox Faith, made in ſimplicity of heart by any ſuch Body of Chriſtians, with concord among themſelves, ought to be entertained by all others that *love the truth as it is in Jeſus*, with an anſwerable *rejoycing*: For if the unanimous opinions and aſſertions but in ſome few points of Religion, and that when by two Churches, namely, that of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Meſſengers of Antioch* met, aſſiſted by ſome of the *Apoſtles*, whereby the Believers of thoſe times received with ſo much joy, (as it is ſaid, *They rejoice for the conſolation*) much more this is to be done, when the *whole* ſubſtance of Faith, and *form of wholeſome words* ſhall be declared by the Meſſengers of a multitude of Churches, though wanting thoſe advantages of counſel and authority of the *Apoſtles*, which *that Aſſembly* had. Acts 15.

Which acceptation is then more ſpecially due, when theſe ſhall (to chooſe) utter and declare their Faith, in the ſame *ſubſtance* for *matter*, yea, *words*, for the moſt part, that other Churches and Aſſemblies, reputed the *moſt Orthodox*, have done before them. For upon ſuch a correſpondency, all may ſee *that* actually accompliſhed, which the Apoſtle did but exhort unto, and pray for, in thoſe *two* more eminent Churches of the *Corintians* & the *Romans*, (and

(&so in them for all the Christians of his time) that both *Jew & Gentile*, that is,
Rom. 1. 5. men of different perswasions, (as they were) *might glorifie GOD with one mind*
6, 8, 9. *and with one mouth*. And truly, the very turning of the Gentiles to the own-
ing of the same Faith, in the substance of it, with the Christian Jew (though
differing in the greater points then we do from our brethren) is presently
after dignified by the Apostle with this stile, That it is the *Confession of Je-*
sus Christ himself; nor as the *Object* onely, but as the *Author* and *Maker*
thereof: *I will confesse to thee* (saith Christ to God) *among the Gentiles*.
So that in all such accords, *Christ* is the *great and first Confessor*; and we,
and all our Faith uttered by us, are but the *Epistles*. (as *Paul*) and *Confes-*
v. 9. *sions* (as *Isaiah* there) *of their Lord and ours*; He, but expressing what is
written in his heart, through their hearts and mouthes *to the glory of God*
the Father: And shall not we all *rejoice* herein, when as Christ himself is
said to do it upon this occasion: as it there also follows, *I will sing unto thy*
Name.

Further, as the *soundnesse* and *wholesomenesse of the matter* gives the *vigor*
and *life* to such *Confessions*, so the *inward freenesse*, *willingnesse* and *readinesse*
of the spirits of the *Confessors* do contribute the *beauty* and *lovelinesse* thereunto, as it is in *Prayer* to God, so in *Confessions* made to men.
If two or three met, do agree, it renders both, to either the more acceptable.
The *Spirit of Christ* is in himself too *free*, great and generous a Spirit, to suf-
fer himself to be used by any humane arm, to whip men into belief; he
drives not, but *gently leads into all truth*, and *perswades* men to *dwell in the*
tents of like precious Faith; which would lose of its preciousnesse and value,
if that sparkle of freenesse shone not in it: The character of his people, is to
be a *willing people in the day of his power*, (not Mans) *in the beauties of ho-*
linesse, which are the Assemblings of the Saints: one glory of which As-
semblings in that first Church, is said to have been, *They met with one ac-*
cord; which is there in that Psalm prophesied of, in the instance of that
first Church, for all other that should succeed.

And as this great Spirit is in himself free, when, and how far, and in whom
to work, so where & when he doth work, he carrieth it with the same free-
dome, and is said to be a *free Spirit*, as he both is, and works in us: And
where this *Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*.

Now, as to this *Confession* of ours, besides, that a conspicuous conjunction
of the particulars mentioned, hath appeared therein: There are also *four re-*
markable Attendants thereon, which added, might perhaps in the eyes of
sober and indifferent spirits, give the whole of this Transaction a room and
rank amongst other many good and memorable things of this age; at least
all set together, do cast as clear a gleam and manifestation of Gods Power
and Presence, as hath appeared in any such kind of *Confessions*, made by so
numerous a company these later years.

The first, is the *Temper*, (or distemper rather) of the *times*, during which,
these *Churches* have been gathering, and which they have run through. All
do (out of a general sence) complain that the times have been *perillous*, or
difficult times; (as the apostle foretold) and that in respect to danger from
seducing spirits, more perillous then the hottest seasons of Persecution. We
have

have ſailed through an Æſtuation, Fluxes and Refluxes of great varieties of Spirits, Doctrines, Opinions and Occurrences; and eſpecially in the matter of Opinions, which have been accompanied in their leverall ſeaſons, with powerfull perſwaſions and tentations, to ſeduce thoſe of our way. It is known men have taken the freedome (notwithſtanding what Authority hath interpoſed to the contrary) to vent and vend their own vain and accurſed imaginations, contrary to the great and fixed Truths of the Goſpel, inſomuch, as take the whole round and circle of deluſions, the Devil hath in this ſmall time, ran, it will be found, that every truth, of greater or leſſer weight, hath by one or other hand, at one time or another, been queſtioned and called to the Bar amongſt Us, yea, and impleaded, under the pretext (which hath ſome degree of Juſtice in it) that all ſhould not be bound up to the Traditions of former times, nor take Religion upon truſt.

Whence it hath come to paſſe, that many of the ſoundeſt Profeſſors were put upon a new ſearch and diſquiſition of ſuch truths, as they had taken for granted, and yet had lived upon the comfort of: to the end they might be able to convince others, and eſtabliſh their own hearts againſt that darkneſſe and unbelief, that is ready to cloſe with errour, or at leaſt to doubt of the truth, when errour is ſpeciouſly preſented. And hereupon we do profeſſedly account it one of the greateſt advantages gained out of the temptations of theſe times; yea the honour of the Saints and Miniſters of theſe Nations. That after they had ſweerly been exerciſed in, and had improved *practical* and *experimental Truths*, this ſhould be their further lot, to examine and diſcus, and indeed, anew to learn over every *Doctrinal Truth*, both out of the Scriptures, and alſo with a freſh taſte thereof in their own hearts; which is no other then what the Apoſtle exhorts to, *Try all things, hold faſt that which is good.* *Converſion* unto God at *firſt*, what is it elſe then a *ſavory* and *affectionate application*, and the bringing home to the heart with ſpirituall *light* and *life*, all *truths* that are neceſſary to ſalvation, together with other *leſſer truths?* all which we had afore converſion taken in but notionally from common education and tradition.

Now that after this firſt guſt thoſe who have bin thus converted ſhould be put upon a new probation and ſearch out of the Scriptures, not onely of all principles explicitely ingredients to Converſion; (unto which the Apoſtle referreth the *Galations* when they had diverted from them) but of all other ſuperſtructures as well as fundamentals; and together therewith, anew to experiment the power and ſweerneſſe of all theſe in their own ſouls: What is this but *tryed Faith* indeed? and equivalent to a new converſion unto the truth? *An Anchor* that is proved to be *ſure* and *ſtedfaſt*, that will certainly hold in all contrary ſtorms: This was the eminent ſeal and commendation which thoſe holy Apoſtles that lived and wrote laſt; *Peter, John* and *Jude*; im their Epiſtles did ſet and give to the *Chriſtians* of the latter part of thoſe *primitive times*. And beſides, it is clear and evident by all the other Epiſtles, from firſt to laſt, that it coſt the Apoſtles as much, and far more care and pains to preſerve them they had converted, *in the truth*, then they had taken to turn them thereunto at firſt. And it is in it ſelf as great a work and inſtance of the power of God, that *keeps*, yea, *guards us through faith unto ſalvation.* This perſwaſion cometh not of him that calleth you. Gal. 5. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 5.

Secondly, let this be added, (or ſuperadded rather) to give full weight and meaſure, even to running over) that we have all along this ſeaſon, held forth (though quarrelled with for it by our brethren) this great principle of theſe times, *That amongſt all Chriſtian States and Churches, there ought to be vouchſafed a forbearance and mutual indulgence unto Saints of all perſwaſions, that keep unto, and hold faſt the neceſſary foundations of faith and holineſs* in all other matters *extrafundamental*, whether of Faith or Order.

This to have been our conſtant principle, we are not aſhamed to confeſſe to the whole Chriſtian world. Wherein yet we deſire we may be underſtood, not as if in the *abſtract* we ſtood indifferent to falſhood or truth, or were careleſſe whether faith or errour, in any Truths but fundamentall, did obtain or not, ſo we had our liberty in our petty and ſmaller differences: or as if to make ſure of that, we had cut out this wide cloak for it: No, we profeſſe that the whole, and every particle of that Faith delivered to the Saints, (the ſubſtance of which we have according to our light here profeſſed) is, as to the propagation and furtherance of it by *all Goſpel-means*, as precious to us as our lives, or what can be ſuppoſed dear to us; and in our ſphere we have endeavoured to promote them accordingly: But yet withall, we have and do contend, (and if we had all the power which any, or all of our brethren of differing opinions have deſired to have over us, or others, we ſhould freely grant it unto them all) we have and do contend for this, That *in the concrete*, the perſons of all ſuch gracious Saints, they and their errours, as they are in them, when they are but ſuch errours as do and may ſtand with communion with Chriſt, though they ſhould not repent of them, as not being convinced of them to the end of their daies; that thoſe, with their errours (that are purely ſpirituall, and intrench and overthrow not civill ſocieties,) as *concrete with their perſons*, ſhould for Chriſts ſake be born withall by all Chriſtians in the world; and they notwithſtanding be permitted to enjoy all Ordinances and ſpirituall Priviledges according to their light, as freely as any other of their brethren that pretend to the greateſt Orthodoxity; as having as equal, and as fair a right in and unto Chriſt, and all the holy things of Chriſt, that any other can challenge to themſelves.

And this doth afford a full and invincible teſtimony on our behalf, in that whiles we have ſo earneſtly contended for this juſt liberty of Saints in all the Churches of Chriſt, *we our ſelves have had no need of it*: that is as to the *matter* of the profeſſion of *Faith* which we have maintained together with others: and of this, this ſubſequent Confeſſion of Faith gives ſufficient evidence. So as we have the confidence in Chriſt, to utter in the words of thoſe two great Apoſtles, That *we have ſtood faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free* (in the behalf of others, rather then our ſelves) and having been *free, have not made* uſe of our *liberty* for *a cloak of errour or maliciouſneſſe* in our ſelves: And yet, loe, whereas from the beginning of the rearing of theſe Churches, that of the Apoſtle hath been (by ſome) prophecyed of us, and applyed to us, *That whiles we promiſed* (unto others) *liberty, we our ſelves would become ſervants of corruption, and be brought in bondage* to all ſorts of fancies and imaginations; yet the whole world may

now

now ſee after the experience of many years ran through (and it is manifeſt by this Confeſſion) that the great and gracious God hath not onely kept us in that common unity of the Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God, which the whole Community of Saints have and ſhall in their generations come unto, but alſo in the ſame Truths, both ſmall and great, that are built thereupon, that any other of the beſt and more pure Reformed Churches in their beſt times (which were their firſt times) have arrived unto: This Confeſſion withall holding forth a profeſſed oppoſition unto the common errours and hereſies of theſe times.

Theſe *two conſiderations* have been taken from *the ſeaſons* we have gone through.

Thirdly, let the *ſpace of time it ſelf*, or dayes, wherein from firſt to laſt the whole of this Confeſſion was framed and conſented to by the whole of us, be duly conſidered by ſober and ingenuous ſpirits: the whole of dayes in which we had meetings about it, (ſet aſide the two Lords days, and the firſt days meeting, in which we conſidered and debated what to pitch upon) were but eleven days, part of which alſo was ſpent by ſome of us in prayer, others in conſulting; and in the end all agreeing. We mention this ſmall circumſtance but to this end, (which ſtill addes unto the former) That it gives demonſtration, not of our *freeneſſe* and *willingneſſe* onely, but of our *readineſſe* and *preparedneſſe* unto ſo great a work; which otherwiſe, and in other Aſſemblies, hath ordinarily taken up long and great debates, as in ſuch a variety of matters of ſuch concernment, may well be ſuppoſed to fall out. And this is no other then what the Apoſtle *Peter* exhorts unto, *Be ready alwayes to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh you a reaſon or account of the hope that is in you.* The Apoſtle *Paul* ſaith of the ſpirituall Truths of the Goſpel, *That God hath prepaped them for thoſe that love him.* The inward and innate conſtitution of the new creature being in it ſelf ſuch as is ſuted to all thoſe Truths, as congenial thereunto: But although there be this mutuall *adaptneſſe* between theſe two, yet ſuch is the mixture of ignorance, darkneſſe and unbelief, carnall reaſon, preoccupation of judgement, intereſt of parties, wantonneſſe in opinion, proud adhering to our own perſwaſions, and perverſe oppoſitions and averſneſſe to agree with others, and a multitude of ſuch like diſtempers *common to believing men*: All which are not only mixed with, but at times, (eſpecially in ſuch times as have paſſed over our heads) are ready to overcloud our judgements, and do cauſe our eyes to be double, and ſometimes prevail as well as luſts, and do byaſs our wills and affections: And ſuch is their mixture, that although there may be exſiſtent an habituall preparedneſſe in mens ſpirits, yet not alwayes a preſent readineſſe to be found, ſpecially not in ſuch a various multitude of men, to make a ſolemn and deliberate profeſſion of all truths, it being as great a work to find the ſpirits of the juſt (perhaps the beſt) of Saints, ready for every truth, as *to be prepared to every good work.*

1 Pet. 3. 15.

8 Cor. 2.

It is therefore to be looked at as a great and ſpeciall work of the holy Ghoſt, that ſo numerous a company of Miniſters, and other principall brethren, ſhould ſo *readily*, *ſpeedily* and *joyntly* give up themſelves unto ſuch a whole Body of *Truths that are after godlineſſe.*

This argues they had not their faith to ſeek; but, as is ſaid of *Ezra*, that *they were ready Scribes*, and (as Chriſt) *inſtructed unto the kingdome of heaven*, being as the good *houſholders* of ſo many families of Chriſt, *bringing forth of their ſtore and treaſury New and Old*. It ſhews theſe truths had been familiar to them, and they acquainted with them, as with their *daily food and proviſion*, (as Chriſts alluſion there inſinuates) in a word, that *ſo they had preached*, and that *ſo their people had believed*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks upon one like particular occaſion. And the Apoſtle *Paul* conſiders (in caſes of this nature) *the ſuddenneſſe* or *length of the time*, either one way or the other; whether it were in mens *forſaking* or *learning* of the truth. Thus the *ſuddenneſſe* in the *Galatians* caſe in leaving the truth, he makes a wonder of it: *I marvell that you are SO SOON* (that is, in ſo ſhort a time) *re-*
Gal. 1. 6. *moved from the true Goſpel unto another.* Again on the contrary, in the *Hebrews* he aggravates their backwardneſſe, *That when for the time you ought to be Teachers, you had need that one teach you the very firſt principles of the Oracles of God.* The Parable contrary to both theſe having fallen out in this tranſaction, may have ſome ingredient and weight with ingenuous ſpirits in its kind, according to the proportion is put upon either of theſe forementioned in their adverſe kind, and obtain the like ſpeciall obſervation.

This accord of ours hath fallen out without having *held any correſpondency together*, or prepared conſultation by which we might come to be adviſed of one anothers minds. We alledge not this as a matter of commendation in us; no, we acknowledge it to have been a great neglect: And accordingly one of the *firſt propoſals* for union amongſt us was, That there might be a conſtant correſpondence held among the Churches for counſell and mutuall edification, ſo for time to come to prevent the like omiſſion.

We confeſſe that from the firſt, every, or at leaſt the generality of our Churches, have been in a manner like ſo many Ships (though holding forth the ſame generall colours) lanch't ſingly, and ſailing apart and alone in the vaſt Ocean of theſe tumultuating times, and they expoſed to every wind of Doctrine, under no other conduct then the Word and Spirit, and their particular Elders and principall Brethren, without Aſſociations among our ſelves, or ſo much as holding our common lights to others, whereby to know where we were.

But yet whileſt we thus confeſſe to our own ſhame this neglect, let all acknowledge, that God hath ordered it for his high and greater glory, in that his ſingular care and power ſhould have ſo watcht over each of theſe, as that all ſhould be found to have ſteered their courſe by the ſame Chart, and to have been bound for one and the ſame Port, and that upon this generall ſearch now made, that the ſame holy and bleſſed Truths of all ſorts, which are currant and warrantable amongſt all the other Churches of Chriſt in the world, ſhould be found to be our Lading.

The whole, and every of theſe things when put together, do cauſe us (whatever men of prejudiced and oppoſite ſpirits may find out to ſlight them, with a holy admiration, to ſay, That *this is no other* then *the Lords doing*; and which we with thankſgiving do take from his hand as a ſpeciall *token upon us for good*, and doth *ſhew that God is faithfull* and *upright* to-

towards *thoſe that are planted in his houſe*: And that as the *Faith* was but *once* for all, and intentionally *firſt delivered unto the Saints*; ſo the *Saints*, when not abiding ſcattered, but gathered under their *reſpective Paſtors* according to *Gods heart into an houſe*, and Churches unto the *living God*, ſuch *together* are, as *Paul* foreſpake it, the moſt ſteady and firm *pillar* and *ſeat of Truth* that God hath any where appointed to himſelf on earth, where his truth is beſt conſerved, and publickly held forth; there being in ſuch Aſſembles weekly *a rich dwelling of the Word amongſt them*, that is, a dayly open houſe kept by the means of thoſe good *Houſholders*, their Teachers and other Inſtructers reſpectively appropriated to them, whom Chriſt in the vertue of his *Aſcention*, continues to *give as gifts* to his people, himſelf *dwelling amongſt* them; to the end that by this, as the moſt ſure ſtanding permanent means, *the Saints might be perfected till we all* (even all the Saints in preſent and future ages) do come by this conſtant and daily Ordinance of his unto *the unity of the Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſſe of Chriſt* (which though growing on by parts and piecemeal, will yet appear compleat, when *that great and generall Aſſembly* ſhall be gathered then when this world is ended, and theſe diſpenſations have had their fulneſſe and period) and *ſo that from henceforth* (ſuch a proviſion being made for us) *we be no more children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine.* Eph. 4. 12. 14.

And finally, this doth give a freſh and recent demonſtration, that the *great Apoſtle* and *High-prieſt of our profeſſion* is indeed *aſcended* into heaven, and continues there with power and care, *faithfull as a ſon over his own houſe, whoſe houſe are we, if we hold faſt the confidence and the rejoycing of the hope firm unto the end*: and ſhews that he will, as he hath promiſed, be with his own Inſtitutions to the end of the world. Heb. 3. 6.

It is true, that many ſad miſcarriages, diviſions, breaches, fallings off from holy Ordinances of God, have along this time of temptation, (eſpecially in the beginning of it) been found in ſome of our Churches; and no wonder, if what hath been ſaid be fully conſidered: Many reaſons might further be given hereof, that would be a ſufficient Apology, without the help of a retortion upon other Churches (that promiſed themſelves peace) how that more deſtroying ruptures have befallen them, and that in a wider ſphere and compaſſe; which though it ſhould not juſtify us, yet may ſerve to ſtop others mouths.

Let *Rome* glory of the peace in, and *obedience* of her children, againſt the Reformed *Churches* for their diviſions that occurred (eſpecially in the firſt rearing of them) whileſt we all know the cauſes of their dull and ſtupid peace to have been carnal intereſts, worldly correſpondencies, and coalitions ſtrengthened by gratifications of all ſorts of men by that Religion, the principles of blind Devotion, Traditional Faith, Eccleſiaſtical Tyranny, by which ſhe keeps her children in bondage to this day. We are alſo certain, that the very ſame prejudice that from hence they would caſt upon the Reformed (if they were juſt) do lye as fully againſt thoſe pure Churches raiſed up by the Apoſtles themſelves in thoſe firſt times: for as *we have heard of their patience*, ſufferings, conſolations, and the tranſcending gifts poured

our,

out, and graces ſhining in them, *ſo we have heard complaints* of their *diviſions* too, of the *forſakings of their Aſſemblies*, as the cuſtome or *manner of SOME was* (which later were in that reſpect *felones de ſe*; and needed no other *delivering up to Satan* as their puniſhment, then what they executed upon themſelves.) We read of the *ſhipwrack* of *Faith* and a *good Conſcience*, and *overthrowing of the faith of SOME*; and ſtill but of *ſome*, not *all*, nor the *moſt*: which is one piece of an Apologie the Apoſtle again and again inſerts to future ages, and through mercy we have the ſame to make.

Heb. 10. 22.

And truly we take the confindence profeſſedly to ſay, that theſe tentations common to the pureſt *Churches of Saints ſeperated from the mixture of the world*, though they grieve us (for *who is offended, and we burnt not?* yet they do not at all ſtumble us, as to the truth of our way, had they been many more: We ſay it again, theſe ſtumble us no more (as to that point) then it doth offend us againſt the power of Religion it ſelf, to have ſeen, and to ſee daily in *particular perſons called out and ſeparated from the world* by an effectuall work of converſion, that they for a *while do ſuffer* under diſquietments, vexations turmoils, unſettlements of ſpirit, that they are toſſed with tempeſts and horrid temptations, ſuch as they had not in their former eſtate, whileſt they *walked according to the courſe of this world*: For *Peter* hath ſufficiently inſtructed us whoſe buſineſſe it is to raiſe ſuch ſtorms, eyen the *Devill's*; and alſo whoſe deſign it is, that *after they have ſuffered a while*, thereby they ſhall be *ſettled, perfected, ſtabliſhed*, that have ſo ſuffered, even *the God of all Grace*. And look what courſe of diſpenſation God holds to *Saints perſonally*, he doth the like to *bodies of Saints* in *Churches*, and the Devil the ſame for his part too: And that conſolatory Maxime of the Apoſtle, *God ſhall tread down Satan under your feet ſhortly*, which *Paul* uttereth concerning the Church of *Rome*, ſhews how both *God* and *Satan* have this very hand therein; for he ſpeaks that very thing in reference unto their diviſions, as the coherence clearly manifeſts; and ſo you have both deſigns expreſt at once.

Yea, we are not a little induced to think, that the *diviſions*, breaches, *&c.* of thoſe *primitive Churches* would not have been ſo frequent among the people themſelves, and not the Elders only, had not the freedome, liberties and rights of the Members (the Brethren, we mean) been ſtated and exerciſed in thoſe Churches, the ſame which we maintain and contend for to be in ours.

Yea (which perhaps may ſeem more ſtrange to many) had not thoſe Churches been conſtituted of Members inlightned further then with notionall and traditionall knowledge, by a new and more powerfull light of the *Holy Ghoſt*, wherein *they had been made partakers of the holy Ghoſt, and the heavenly gift, and their hearts had taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the world to come*, and of ſuch Members at loweſt, there had not fallen out thoſe kinds of diviſions among them.

For experience hath ſhewn, that the common ſort of meer *Doctrinall Profeſſours* (ſuch as the moſt are now a dayes) whoſe higheſt elevation is but *freedome from morall ſcandall joyned* with *devotion* to Chriſt through meer education, ſuch as in many *Turks* is found towards *Mahomet*, that theſe find-

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ing and feeling themſelves not much concerned in the *active part of Religion*, ſo they may have the honour (eſpecially upon a Reformation of a new Refinement) that themſelves are approved Members, admitted to the Lords Supper, and their children to the Ordinance of Baptiſme, they *regard not other matters* (as *Gallio* did not) but do eaſily and readily give up themſelves unto their Guides, being like dead fiſhes carried with the common ſtream; whereas thoſe that have a further renewed light by a work of the holy Ghoſt, whether *ſaving* or *temporary*, are upon the quite contrary grounds apt to be buſie about, and inquiſitive into, what they are to receive and practiſe, or wherein their conſciences are profeſſedly concerned and involved: And thereupon they take the freedome to *examine* and *try the ſpirits, whether of God or no*: And from hence are more apt to diſſatisfaction, and from thence to run into diviſion, and many of ſuch proving to be inlightned but with a *temporary*, not ſaving *Faith* (who have ſuch a work of the Spirit upon them, and profeſſion in them, as will and doth approve it ſelf to the judgement of Saints, and ought to be ſo judged, untill they be otherwiſe diſcovered) who at long run, prove hypocrites through indulgence unto luſts, and then out of their luſts perſiſt to hold up theſe diviſions unto breach of, or departings from Churches, and the Ordinances of God, and *God is even* with them for it, *they waxing worſe and worſe, deceiving and being deceived*; *and* even many of thoſe that are ſincere, through a mixture of darkneſſe and erroneouſneſs in their judgements, are for a ſeaſon apt out of conſcience *to be led away with the errour of others, which lie in wait to deceive.*

Inſomuch as the Apoſtle upon the example of thoſe firſt times, foreſeeing alſo the like events in following generations upon the like cauſes, hath been bold to ſet this down as a *ruled Caſe*, that likewiſe in other Churches ſo conſtituted and *de facto* empriviledged as that of the Church of *Corinth* was (which ſingle Church, in the ſacred Records about it, is the compleateſt Mirrour of Church-Conſtitution, Order and Government, and events thereupon enſuing, of any one Church whatever that we have ſtory of) his Maxim is, *There muſt be alſo diviſions* amongſt you; he ſeetly inſerts an [*ALSO*] in the caſe, as that which had been in his own obſervation, and that which would be ſhortly the fate of other Churches like thereunto, *ſo propheſieth he*: And he ſpeaks this as peremptorily as he doth elſewhere in that other, *We muſt through many tribulations enter into the Kingdome of Heaven*: Yea, and that *all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution*, There is a [*MUST*] upon both a like, and we bleſſe God, that we have run through both, and do ſay, and we ſay no more; *That as it was then, ſo it is now*, in both reſpects.

However, ſuch hath been the powerfull hand of Gods Providence in *theſe*, which have been the worſt of our *Tryals*, That out of an approved experience and obſervation of the iſſue, we are able to adde that other part of the Apoſtles Prediction, That therefore *ſuch rents muſt be, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt among you*; which holy iſſue God (as having aimed at it therein) doth frequently and certainly bring about in Churches, as he doth bring upon them that other fate of diviſion. Let them therefore

look unto it, that are the *Authours of ſuch diſturbances*, as the Apoſtle warneth, *Gal.* 5. 10. The *experiment is this*, That we have ſeen, and do daily ſee that multitudes of holy and precious ſouls, and (in the holy Ghoſts word) *approved Saints*, have been, and are the more rooted and grounded by means of theſe ſhakings, and do continue to cleave the faſter to Chriſt, and the purity of his Ordinances, and value them the more by this coſt God hath put them to for the enjoying of them, *who having been planted in the Houſe of the Lord, have flouriſhed in the Courts of our God*, in theſe evil times, to *ſhew that the Lord is upright*. And this experimented event from out of ſuch diviſions, hath more confirmed us, and is a lowder Apologie for us, then all that our oppoſites are able from our breaches to alleadge to prejudice us.

June 20. 1648. We will adde a few words for *concluſion*, and give a more particular account of this our *DECLARATION*. In drawing up this *Confeſſion of Faith*, we have had before us the *Articles of Religion*, approved and paſſed by both Houſes of *Parliament*, after advice had with an *Aſſembly of Divines*, called together by them for that purpoſe. To which Confeſſion, for the ſubſtance of it, we fully aſſent, as do our Brethren of *New-England*, and the Churches alſo of *Scotland*, as each in their general Synods have teſtified.

A few things we have added for obviating ſome erroneous opinions, that have been more broadly and boldly here of late maintained by the Aſſerters, then in former times; and made other additions and alterations in *method* here and there, and ſome clearer explanations, as we found occaſion.

We have endeavoured throughout, to hold to ſuch Truths in this our Confeſſion, as are more properly termed *matters of Faith*; and what is of *Church-order*, we diſpoſe in certain Propoſitions by it ſelf. To this courſe we are led by the Example of the Honourable *Houſes of Parliament*, obſerving what was eſtabliſhed, and what omitted by them in that *Confeſſion* the Aſſembly preſented to them. Who thought it not convenient to have matters of *Diſcipline* and *Church-Government* put into a *Confeſſion of Faith*, eſpecially ſuch particulars thereof, as then were, and ſtill are controverted and under diſpute by men Orthodox and ſound in Faith. The 30. *cap.* therefore of that Confeſſion, as it was preſented to them by the Aſſembly, which is of *Church-Cenſures*, their *Uſe*, *Kinds*, and in *whom placed*: As alſo *cap.* 31. of *Synods* and *Counſels*, by *whom* to be *called*, of *what force* in their *decrees* and *determinations*. And the 4. *paragr.* of the 20. *cap.* which determines what *opinions* and practiſes *diſturb the peace* of the Church, and how ſuch diſturbers ought to *be proceeded againſt* by the *Cenſures of the Church*, and puniſhed by the *Civill Magiſtrate*. Alſo a great part of the 24. *cap.* of *Marriage* and *Divorce*. Theſe were ſuch doubtfull aſſertions, and ſo unſuitable to a Confeſſion of Faith, as the *Honourable Houſes* in their great Wiſdome thought fit to lay them aſide: There being nothing that tends more to heighten diſſentings among Brethren, then to determine and adopt the *matter* of their *difference*, under ſo high a title, as to be an *Article* of *our Faith*: So that there are two whole Chapters, and ſome Paragraphs in other Chapters in their Confeſſion, that we have upon this account omitted;

and.

and the rather do we give this notice, becauſe that Copy of the Parliaments, followed by us, is in few mens hands; the other as it came from the *Aſſembly*, being approved of in *Scotland*, was printed and haſtened into the world before the *Parliament* had declared their Reſolutions about it; which was not till *June* 20. 1648. and yet hath been, and continueth to be the Copy (ordinarily) only ſold, printed and reprinted for theſe *eleven* years. Aug. 1647.

After the 19. *cap. of the Law*, we have added a *cap. of the Goſpel*, it being a Title that may not well be omitted in a Confeſſion of Faith: In which Chapter, what is diſperſed, and by intimation in the Aſſemblies Confeſſion with ſome little addition, is here brought together, and more fully under one head.

That there are not Scriptures annexed as in ſome Confeſſions, (though in divers others its otherwiſe) we give the ſame account as did the *Reverend Aſſembly* in the ſame caſe: which was this; *The Confeſſion being large, and ſo framed, as to meet with the common errours, if the Scriptures ſhould have been alledged with any clearneſſe, and by ſhewing where the ſtrength of the proof lieth, it would have required a volume.* Seſſion. 786.

We ſay further, it being our utmoſt end in this (as it is indeed of a *Confeſſion*) humbly to give an account what we hold and aſſert in theſe matters; that others, eſpecially the Churches of Chriſt may judge of us accordingly. This we aimed at, and not ſo much to inſtruct others, or convince gainſayers. Theſe are the proper works of other inſtitutions of Chriſt, and are to be done in the ſtrength of expreſſe Scripture. *A Confeſſion* is an Ordinance of another nature.

What we have laid down and aſſerted about *CHURCHES* and their *Government*, we humbly conceive to be the *Order* which Chriſt himſelf hath appointed to be obſerved, we have endeavoured to follow Scripture-light; and theſe alſo that went before us according to that Rule, deſirous of neareſt uniformity with *reforming Churches*, as with our Brethren in *New-England*, ſo with others, that differ from them and us.

The Models and Platforms of this ſubject laid down by learned men, and practiſed by Churches, are various. We do not judge it *brotherly*, or *grateful*, to inſiſt upon compariſons as ſome have done; but this experience teacheth, That the *variety*, and poſſibly the *diſputes* and *emulations* ariſing thence, have much ſtrengthened, if not fixed, this unhappy perſwaſion in the minds of ſome learned and good men, namely, *That there is no ſettled order laid down in Scripture*; but its left to the prudence of the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, to compoſe or make choice of ſuch a Form as is moſt ſutable and conſiſtent with their Civil Government. Where this opinion is entertained in the perſwaſion of Governours, there Churches aſſerting their Power and Order, to be *jure divino*, and the appointment of Jeſus Chriſt, can have no better nor more honourable entertainment, then a Toleration or Permiſſion.

Yet herein there is this remarkable advantage to all parties that differ, about what in Government is of Chriſts appointment; in that ſuch *Magiſtrates* have a far greater latitude in conſcience, to tolerate and permit the

severall forms of each so bound up in their perswasion, then *they* have to submit unto what the Magistrate shall impose: And thereupon the Magistrate exercising an indulgency and forbearance, with protection and encouragement to the people of God, so differing from him, and amongst themselves: Doth therein discharge as great a faithfulnesse to Christ, and love to his people, as can any way be supposed and expected from any Christian Magistrate, of what perswasion soever he is. And where this clemency from Governours is shewed to any sort of persons or Churches of Christ upon such a principle, it will in equity produce this just effect, That all so that differ from him, & amongst themselves, standing in equal & alike difference from the principle of such a Magistrate, he is equally free to give alike liberty to them, one as well as the other.

This faithfulness in our Governors we do with thankfulness to God Acknowledg, and to their everlastng honor, which appeared much in the late Reformation, The *Hierarchie*, *Common prayer-book*, and all other things grievous to Gods people, being removed, they made choice of an assembly of learned men, to advise what Government and Order is meet to be established in the room of these things; and because it was known there were different opinions (as alwaies hath been among Godly men) about formes of Church-Government, there was by the *Ordinance* first sent forth to call an Assembly, not only a choice made of persons of severall perswasions to sit as *Members* there, but liberty given, to a *lesser number*, if dissenting to report their Judgments and Reasons, as well and as freely as the *major part*.

Hereupon the Honourable House of Commons (an Indulgence we hope will never be forgotten) finding by papers received from them, that the Members of the Assembly were not like to compose differences amongst themselves, so as to joyn in the same Rule for Church-Government, did order as followeth: *That a Committee of Lords and Commons, &c. do take into consideration the differences of the Opinions in the Assembly of Divines in point of Church-Government, and to endeavor a union if it be possible; and in case that cannot be done, to endeavor the finding out some way, how far tender consciences, who cannot in all things submit to the same Rule which shall be established, may be born with according to the Word, and as may stand with the publique peace.*

By all which it is evident the Parliament Purposed not to establish the Rule of Church-Government with such rigor, as might not permit and bear with a practise different from what they had established: In persons and Churches different principles, if occasion were. And this Christian clemency and indulgence in our Governours hath been the foundation of that *Freedome and Liberty*, in the managing of Church-affairs, which *our Brethren*, as well as *WE*, that differ from them, do now, and have many years enjoined.

Ordinance of March 14 1645.

The Honourable Houses by severall Ordinances of Parliament after much consultation, having settled Rules for Church-Government, and *such an Ecclesiastical Order* as they judged *would best joint with the Laws and Government of the Kingdome*, did publish them, requiring the practise hereof through-

throughout the Nation; and in particular, by the Miniſters of the Province of *London*. But (upon the former reaſon or the like charitable conſideration) theſe *Rules* were not impoſed by them under any *PENALTY* or rigorous inforements though frequently urged thereunto by ſome.

Our reverend Brethren of the Province of *London*, having conſidered of theſe Ordinances, and the Church-Government laid down in them, declared their opinions to be, *That their is a compleat rule in thoſe Ordinances*; alſo, *that there are many neceſſary things not yet eſtabliſhed, and ſome things wherein their conſciences are not ſo fully ſatisfied.* Theſe Brethren in the ſame paper, have publiſhed alſo their joint *Reſolution to practiſe in all things according to the rule of the Word, and according to theſe Ordinances, ſo far as they conceive them correſpond to it, and in ſo doing they truſt they ſhall not grive the ſpirit of the truly godly, nor give any juſt occaſion to them that are contrary minded, to blame their proceedings.* Conſiderations and Cautions from Sion Coll. June 19. 1646

We humbly conceive (that *WE* being diſſatisfied in theſe things as our Brethren) the like liberty was intended by the honourable houſes, and may be taken by us of the *Congregational way* (without blame or grief to the ſpirits of thoſe *Brethren* at leaſt) to reſolve, or rather to continue in the ſame reſolution and practiſe in theſe matters, which indeed were our practiſes in times of greateſt oppoſition, and before this reformation was begun.

And as our Brethren *the Miniſters of London*, drew up and publiſhed their *opinions* and *apprehenſions* about Church-Government into an intire Syſtem; ſo we now give the like publick account of our conſciences, and the rules by which we have conſtantly practiſed hitherto; which we have here drawn up, and do preſent. Whereby it will appear how much, or how little we differ in theſe things from our Presbyterian Brethren.

And we truſt there is no juſt cauſe why any man, either from our differring from the preſent ſettlement, it being out of conſcience, and not out of *contempt*, or our differences one from another, being not *wilfull*, ſhould charge either of us with that odious reproach of *Schiſm*, And indeed, if not for our differing from the State-ſettlement, much leſſe becauſe we differ from our Brethren our differences being *in ſome leſſer things, and circumſtances* only, as themſelves acknowledge. And let it be further conſidered, that we have not broken from them or their Order by theſe differences (but rather they from us) and in that reſpect we leſſe deſerve their cenſure; our practiſe being no other then what it was in our breaking from Epiſcopacy, and long before Presbytery, or any ſuch form as now they are in, was taken up by them; and we will not ſay how probable it is that the yoke of Epiſcopacy had been upon our neck to this day, if ſome ſuch way (as formerly, and now is, and hath been termed *Schiſm*) had not with much ſuffering bin then practiſed and ſince continued in.

For *Novelty*, wherewith [illegible] likewiſe both charged by the enemies of both, it is true, in reſpect of the publick and open profeſſion, either of Preſbytery or Independency, this Nation hath been a ſtranger to each way, it's poſſible ever ſince it hath been Chriſtian; though for our ſelves we are able to trace the footſteps of an Independent Congregational way in the an-

Puritanisme. Ang, by Dr. *Aims* near 50. years since, as the opinions of Whitehead, Gilbe, Fox, Dearing, Greenham, Cartwright, Vennes, Fulk, Whitaker, Rainold, Perkins, &c.

cientest customs of the Churches, as also in the writings of our soundest Protestant divines, and (that which we are much satisfied in) a full concurrence throughout in all the substantiall parts of Church-Government, with our Reverend Brethren the *old Puritan non-Conformists*, who being instant in prayer and much sufferings, prevailed with the Lord, and we reap with joy, what they sowed in tears. Our Brethren also that are for Presbyterial subordinations, professe what is of weight against *Novelty* for their way.

And now therefore seeing the Lord, in whose hand is the heart of Princes, hath put into the hearts of our Governours to tolerate and permit (as they have done many years) persons of each perswasion, to enjoy their consciences, though neither come up to the *Rule established by Authority*. And that which is more, to give us both protection, and the same encouragement, that the most devoted *Conformists* in those former superstitious times enjoyed, yea, and by a publick Law to establish this liberty for time to come, and yet further, in the midst of our fears, to set over us a *Prince* that owns this establishment, & cordially resolves to secure our Churches in the enjoyment of these Liberties, if we abuse them not to the disturbance of the Civill Peace.

This should be a very great engagement upon the hearts of all, though of different perswasions, to endeavour our utmost, *jointly* to promove the honour and prosperity of such a Government and Governours by whatsoever means, which in our Callings as Ministers of the Gospel, and as Churches of Iesus Christ the Prince of peace, we are any way able to; as also to be peaceably disposed one towards another, and with mutuall toleration to love as brethren, notwithstanding such differences, remembring, as its very equall we should, the differences that are between *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, being differences between fellow servants, and neither of them having authority given from God or man, to impose their opinions, one more then the other. That our Governours after so solemn an establishment, should thus bear with us both, in our greater differences from their Rule, and after this, for any of us *to take a fellow servant by the throat*, upon the account of a lesser reckoning, and nothing due to *him* upon it: is to forget, at least not to exercise, that compassion and tenderneſse we have found, where we had lesse ground to challenge or expect it.

Our Prayer unto God is. That *whereto we have* already *attained*, *we* all *may walk by the same rule*, and that *wherein we are otherwise minded*, God would reveal it to us in his due time.

A Declaration of the *Faith* and *Order* Owned and Practized in the Congregational Churches in *England.*

CHAP. I.

Of the holy Scripture.

ALthough the Light of Nature, and the Works of Creation and Providence doe ſo far manifeſt the Goodneſs, Wiſdom and Power of God, as to leave men unexcuſable; yet are they not ſufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his Will, which is neceſſary unto ſalvation: Therefore it pleaſed the Lord at ſundry times, and in divers manners to reveal himſelf, and to declare that his Will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preſerving and propagating of the truth, and for the more ſure eſtabliſhment and comfort of the Church againſt the corruption of the fleſh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the ſame wholly unto writing: which maketh the holy Scripture to be moſt neceſſary; thoſe former wayes of Gods revealing his Will unto his people, being now ceaſed.

II.

Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now conteined all the Books of the Old and New Teſtament; which are theſe:

Of the Old Teſtament,

Geneſis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joſhua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Eſther, Job, Pſalms, Proverbs, Eccleſiaſtes, The Song of Songs, Iſaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hoſea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggi, Zechariah, Malachi.

Of the New Teſtament,

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apoſtles, Pauls Epiſtle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galathians,

tians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 To Timothy, 2 To Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation.

All which are given by the inspiration of God to be the Rule of Faith and Life.

III.

The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of Divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of, then other humane writings.

IV.

The Authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the Testimony of any man or Church; but wholly upon God (who is Truth it self) the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

V.

We may be moved and induced by the Testimony of the Church, to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture. And the heavenlinesse of the Matter, the efficacy of the Doctrine, the majesty of the Style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is, to give all glory to God) the full discovery it makes of the onely way of Mans Salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the intire perfection thereof, are Arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it self to be the Word of God; Yet notwithstanding, our full perswasion and assurance of the infallible Truth and Divine Authority thereof, is from the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witnesse by and with the Word in our hearts.

VI.

The whole Counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own Glory, mans Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expresly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new Revelations

of

of the Spirit, or Tradition of men. Nevertheleſſe we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be neceſſary for the ſaving underſtanding of ſuch things as are revealed in the Word: And that there are ſome circumſtances concerning the Worſhip of God, & Government of the Church, common to humane actions and Societies, which are to be ordered by the Light of Nature and Chriſtian prudence, according to the general Rules of the Word, which are alwaies to be obſerved.

VII.

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themſelves, nor alike clear unto all: yet thoſe things which are neceſſary to be known, believed and obſerved for Salvation, are ſo clearly propounded and opened in ſome place of Scripture or other, that not onely the learned, but the unlearned, in a due uſe of the ordinary means, may attain unto a ſufficient underſtanding of them.

VIII.

The Old Teſtament in Hebrew (which was the Native Language of the people of God of old) and the new Teſtament in Greek (which at the time of writing of it was moſt generally known to the Nations) being immediately inſpired by God, and by his ſingular care and providence kept pure in all Ages, are therefore Authentical; ſo as in all Controverſies of Religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But becauſe theſe Original Tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto an intereſt in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and ſearch them; therefore they are to be tranſlated into the vulgar language of every Nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worſhip him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

IX.

The infallible Rule of Interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture it ſelf; And therefore when there is a queſtion about the true and full ſenſe of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it muſt be ſearched and known by other places, that ſpeak more clearly.

X.

The Supreme Judge by which all controverſies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councels, Opinions of ancient Writers, Doctrines of men and private Spirits, are to be examined, and in whoſe Sentence we are to reſt, can be no other; but the holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit; into which Scripture ſo delivered, our Faith is finally reſolved.

CHAP. II.

Of God and of the holy Trinity.

THere is but one onely living and true God; who is infinite in Being and Perfection, a moſt pure Spirit, inviſible, without body, parts, or paſſions, immutable, immenſe, eternall, incomprehenſible, almighty, moſt wiſe, moſt holy, moſt free, moſt abſolute, working all things according to the Counſel of his own immutable and moſt righteous Will, for his own Glory, moſt loving, gracious, mercifull, long-ſuffering, abundant in goodneſſe and truth, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin, the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him; and withall, moſt juſt and terrible in his Judgements, hating all ſin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II.

God hath all Life, Glory, Goodneſſe, Bleſſedneſſe, in, and of himſelf; and is alone, in, and unto himſelf, All-ſufficient, not ſtanding in need of any Creatures, which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but onely manifeſting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone Fountain of all Being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath moſt Sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatſoever himſelf pleaſeth: In his ſight all things are open and manifeſt, his Knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, ſo as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain: He is moſt holy in all his Counſels, in all his Works, and in all his Commands. To him is due from Angels and Men, and every other Creature, whatſoever Worſhip, Service or Obedience, as Creatures, they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further pleaſed to require of them.

III.

In the Unity of the God-head there be three Perſons, of one

one Subſtance, Power, and Eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghoſt: The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; The Son is eternally begotten of the Father; The holy Ghoſt eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. Which Doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our Communion with God, and comfortable Dependance upon him.

CHAP. III.

Of Gods eternall Decree.

I. GOd from all eternity did, by the moſt wiſe and holy Counſel of his own Will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatſoever comes to paſs: Yet ſo as thereby neither is God the Authour of ſin, nor is violence offered to the will of the Creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of ſecond Cauſes taken away, but rather eſtabliſhed.

II. Although God knows whatſoever may or can come to paſs upon all ſuppoſed Conditions, yet hath he not decreed any thing, becauſe he foreſaw it as future, or as that which would come to paſs upon ſuch Conditions.

III. By the Decree of God for the manifeſtation of his Glory, ſome Men and Angels are predeſtinated unto everlaſting Life, and others fore-ordained to everlaſting Death.

IV. Theſe Angels and Men thus predeſtinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably deſigned, and their number is ſo certain and definite, that it cannot be either increaſed or diminiſhed.

V. Thoſe of Mankind that are predeſtinated unto Life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpoſe, and the ſecret counſel and good pleaſure of his Will, hath choſen in Chriſt unto everlaſting Glory, out of his meer free Grace and Love, without any foreſight of Faith or good Works, or perſeverance in either of them, or any other thing in the Creature, as Conditions or Cauſes moving him thereunto, and all to the praiſe of his glorious Grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the Elect unto Glory, ſo hath he by

the eternal and moſt free purpoſe of his Will foreordained all the means thereunto: Wherefore they who are elected, being faln in Adam, are redeemed by Chriſt, are effectually called unto Faith in Chriſt by his Spirit working in due ſeaſon, are juſtified, adopted, ſanctified and kept by his power, through Faith, unto ſaluation. Neither are any other redeemed by Chriſt, or effectually called, juſtified, adopted, ſanctified, and ſaved, but the Elect onely.

VII.

The reſt of mankind God was pleaſed, according to the unſearchable Counſel of his own Will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaſeth, for the glory of his Sovereign power over his Creatures, to paſſe by and to ordain them to diſhonor and wrath for their ſin, to the praiſe of his glorious Juſtice.

VIII.

The Doctrine of this high myſtery of Predeſtination, is to be handled with ſpeciall prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectuall Vocation, be aſſured of their eternall Election. So ſhall this Doctrine afford matter of praiſe, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence and abundant conſolation to all that ſincerely obey the Goſpel,

CHAP. IV.

Of Creation.

IT pleaſed God the Father, Son and holy Ghoſt, for the manifeſtation of the glory of his eternall Power, Wiſdome and Goodneſſe, in the beginning, to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether viſible or inviſible, in the ſpace of ſix daies, and all very good.

II.

After God had made all other creatures, he created Man, male and female, with reaſonable and immortal Souls, endued with knowledge, righteouſneſs and true holineſs, after his own Image, having the Law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a poſſibility of tranſgreſſing, being left to the liberty of their own Will, which was ſubject unto change. Beſides this Law written in their hearts, they

received

received a command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil; which whiles they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the Creatures.

CHAP. V.

Of Providence.

GOd the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things from the greatest even to the least by his most wise and holy Providence, according unto his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own Will, to the praise of the glory of Wisdome, Power, Justice, Goodnesse and Mercy.

II.

Although in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to passe immutably, and infallably; yet by the same Providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second Causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III.

God in his ordinary Providence maketh use of Means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.

IV.

The almighty Power, unsearchable Wisdome, and infinite Goodnesse of God, so far manifest themselves in his Providence, in that his determinate Counsel extendeth it self even to the first Fall, and all other sins of Angels and Men (and that not by a bare permission) which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth in a manifold Dispensation to his own most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulnesse thereof proceedeth only from the Creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the authour or approver of sin.

V.

The most wise, righteous and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulnesse of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependance for their support upon himself, and to make

make them more watchfull against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

VI.

As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blinde and harden, from them he not onely withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been inlightned in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects, as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and withall gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softning of others.

VII.

As the providence of God doth in generall reach to all Creatures, so after a most speciall manner it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

CHAP. VI.

Of the fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.

GOd having made a Covenant of Works and Life, thereupon, with our first Parents and all their posterity in them, they being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, did wilfully transgres the Law of their Creation, and break the Covenant in eating the forbidden fruit.

II.

By this sin they, and we in them, fell from originall righteousnes and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III.

They being the Root, and by Gods appointment standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV.

From this Original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly enclined to all evil, do proceed all Actuall transgressions.

V. This

V.

This corruption of nature during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both it self and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

VI.

Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous Law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the Law, and so made subject to death, with all the miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal.

CHAP. VII.

Of Gods Covenant with Man.

THe distance between God and the Creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life, but by some voluntary condescension on Gods part, which he hath been pleased to expresse by way of Covenant.

II.

The first Covenant made with man, was a covenant of Works wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III.

Man by his fall having made himself uncapable of life by that Covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called a Covenant of Grace; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

IV.

This Covenant of Grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting Inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

V.

Although this Covenant hath been differently and variously administred in respect of Ordinances and Institutions in the

Law, and since the comming of Christ in the flesh; yet for the substance and efficacy of it, to all its spiritual and saving ends, it is one and the same; upon the account of which various dispensations, it is called the Old and New Testament.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Christ the Mediator.

I. It pleased God in his eternal purpose, to chuse and ordain, the Lord Jesus his only begotten son, according to a Covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Saviour of his Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the World; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulnesse of time was come, take upon him Mans nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary of her substance: So that two whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were inseperably joyned together in one Person without conversion, compontion, or confusion; which Person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

III. The Lord Jesus in his Humane nature, thus united to the Divine in the Person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the holy Spirit above measure, having in him all the treasures of Wisdome and Knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all goodnesse should dwel, to the end that being holy, harmlesse, undefiled, and full of Grace and Truth, he might be throughly furnished to execute the Office of a Mediator and Surety; which Office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his father, Who also put all Power and Judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

IIII. This Office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which that he might discharge, he was made under the Law

and

and did perfectly fulfil it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have born and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us, enduring most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul, and most painfull sufferings in his body, was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption, on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and Angels at the end of the world.

V.

The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of God, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given him.

VI.

Although the work of Redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation; yet the vertue, efficacy and benefits thereof were communicated to the Elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, and in and by those Promises, Types and Sacrifices wherein he was revealed and signified to be the seed of the Woman, which should bruse the Serpents head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the World, being yesterday, and to day, and the same forever.

VI.

Christ in the work of Mediation acteth according to both Natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to its self; yet by reason of the unity of the Person, that which is proper to one Nature, is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the Person nominated by the other Nature.

VIII.

To all those for whom Christ hath purchased Redempeion, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing unto them in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation, effectually perswading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit, overcomming all their enemies by his Almighty Power and Wisdom, in such manner

and ways as are moſt conſonant to his wonderful and unſearchable diſpenſation.

CHAP. IX.

Of Free-will.

GOd hath endued the Will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any abſolute neceſſity of Nature determined to do good or evil.

II.

Man in his ſtate of Innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleaſing to God; but yet mutably, ſo that he might fall from it.

III.

Man by his fall into a ſtate of ſin, both wholy loſt all ability of will to any ſpiritual good accompanying ſalvation; ſo as a natural man being altogether averſe from that good, and dead in ſin, is not able by his own ſtrength to convert himſelf, or to prepare himſelf thereunto.

IV.

When God converts a ſinner, and tranſlates him into a ſtate of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under ſin, and by his grace alone inables him freely to will and to do that which is ſpiritually good; yet ſo, as that by reaſon of his remaining corruption he doth not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but doth alſo will that which is evil.

V.

The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the ſtate of Glory onely

CHAP. X.

Of Effectual Calling.

ALl thoſe whom God hath predeſtinated unto life, and thoſe onely, he is pleaſed in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call by his Word and Spirit, out of that ſtate of ſin and death by which they are by nature, to grace and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, inlightning their minds ſpiritually and ſavingly to underſtand the things of God, taking away their heart of ſtone, and giving unto them an heart of fleſh, renewing their wills and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jeſus Chriſt; yet ſo as they come moſt freely, being made willing by his grace.

II.

II.

This effectual Call is of Gods free and ſpecial grace alone, not from any thing at all foreſeen in man who is altogether paſſive therein, until being quickned and renewed by the holy Spirit he is thereby enabled to anſwer this Call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III.

Elect infants dying in Infancy, are regenerated and ſaved by Chriſt, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaſeth, ſo alſo are all other elect perſons who are uncapable of being outwardly called the by Miniſtry of the Word.

IV.

Others not elected, although they may be called by the Miniſtry of the Word, and may have ſome common operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father they neither do nor can come unto Chriſt, and therefore cannot be ſaved; much leſs can men not profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion, be ſaved in any other way whatſoever, be they never ſo diligent to frame their lives according to the Light of Nature, and the Law of that Religion they do profeſſe: and to aſſert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious and to be deteſted.

CHAP. XI.

Of Juſtification.

THoſe whom God effectually calleth, he alſo freely juſtifieth, not by infuſing righteouſneſſe unto them but by pardoning their ſins, & by accounting and accepting their perſons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Chriſts ſake alone; nor by imputing Faith it ſelf, the act of believing, or any other Evangelical obedience to them, as their righteouſneſſe, but by imputing Chriſts active obedience unto the whole Law, and paſſive obedience in his death for their whole and ſole righteouſneſſe, they receiving and reſting on him and his righteouſneſſe by Faith; which Faith have they not of themſelves, it is the gift of God.

II.

Faith thus receiving and reſting on Chriſt, and his righteouſneſs, is the alone inſtrument of juſtification; yet it is not alone in the perſon juſtified, but is ever accompanied whth all other ſaving graces, and is no dead Faith, but worketh by Love.

III.

III.

Christ by his Obedience and Death did fully discharge the Debt of all those that are justified, and did by the sacrifice of himself, in the blood of his Cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them, make a proper, reall, and full satisfaction to Gods Justice in their behalf: Yet in as much as he was given by the Father for them, and his Obedience and Satisfaction accepted in their stead and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is onely of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

IV.

God did from all Eternity decree to justifie all the Elect, and Christ did in the fulnesse of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification; Nevertheless, they are not justified personally, untill the holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.

V.

God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified? and although they can never fall from the estate of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under Gods fatherly displeasure: and in that condition they have not usually the light of his Countenance restored unto them, until they humble, themselves, confesse their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

VI.

The justification of Believers under the old Testament was in all those respects one and the same with the justification of Believers under the new Testament.

CHAP. XII.

Of Adoption.

ALl those that are justified, God vouchsafeth in and for his only Son Jesus Christ to make partakers of the grace of Adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and priviledges of the children of God, have his Name put upon them, receive the Spirit of Adoption, have access to the Throne of Grace with boldnesse, are enabled to cry Abba Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of Redemption, and inherit the promises as Heirs of everlasting salvation.

Chap.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Sanctification.

THey that are united to Chriſt, effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new ſpirit created in them, through the vertue of Chriſts death and reſurrection, are alſo further ſanctified really and perſonally through the ſame vertue, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of ſin is deſtroyed, and the ſeveral luſts thereof are more and more weakned, and mortified, and they more and more quickned, and ſtrengthned in all ſaving graces, to the practiſe of all true holineſſe, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.

II.

This Sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life, there abideth ſtill ſome remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariſeth a continual and irreconcileable war, the fleſh luſting againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh,

III.

In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual ſupply of ſtrength from the ſanctifying Spirit of Chriſt, the regenerate part doth overcome, and ſo the Saints grow in grace, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

CHAP. XIV.

Of ſaving Faith.

THe grace of Faith whereby the Elect are enabled to believe to the ſaving of their ſouls, is the work of the Spirit of Chriſt in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the Miniſtery of the Word; by which alſo and by the adminiſtration of the Seal, Prayer, and other means, it is increaſed and ſtrengthned.

II.

By this Faith a Chriſtian believeth to be true whatſoever is revealed in the Word, for the Authority of God himſelf ſpeaking therein, and acteth differently upon that which each particular paſſage thereof containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatnings, and embracing the promiſes of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principle acts of ſaving Faith are, accepting receiving, and reſting

resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by vertue of the covenant of Grace.

III.

This faith although it be different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it (as is all other saving grace) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore though it be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our Faith.

CHAP. XV.

Of Repentance unto life and salvation.

SUch of the Elect as are converted at riper years, having sometime lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them Repentance unto life.

II.

Whereas there is none that doth good, and sinneth not, and the best of men may through the power and deceitfulnesse of their corruptions dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath in the covenant of Grace mercifully provided, that Believers so sinning and falling, be renewed through repentance unto Salvation.

III.

This saving Repentance is an Evangelical Grace, whereby a person being by the holy Ghost made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth by Faith in Christ humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency praying for pardon and strength of Grace, with a purpose and supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.

IV.

As Repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof; so it is every mans duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.

V.

Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in

in the covenant of Grace, for the preſervation of Believers unto ſalvation, that although there is no ſin ſo ſmall, but it deſerves damnation; yet there is no ſin ſo great that it ſhall bring damnation on them who truly repent; which makes the conſtant preaching of Repentance neceſſary.

CHAP. XVI.

Of good Works.

GOod works are onely ſuch as God hath commanded in his holy Word, and not as ſuch as without the warrant thereof are diviſed by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions.

II.

Theſe good Works done in obedience to Gods commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively Faith, and by them Believers manifeſt their thankfulneſſe, ſtrengthen their aſſurance, edifie their Brethren, adorn the profeſſion of the Goſpel, ſtop the mouthes of the adverſaries, and glorifie God, whoſe workmanſhip they are, created in Chriſt Jeſus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holineſſe, they may have the end eternal life.

III.

Their ability to do good works is not at all of themſelves, but wholly from the Spirit of Chriſt: and that they may be enabled thereunto, beſides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the ſame holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleaſure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unleſſe upon a ſpecial motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in ſtirring up the grace of God that is in them.

IV.

They who in their obedience attain to the greateſt height which is poſſible in this life, are ſo far from being able to ſupererogate and to do more then God requires, as that they fall ſhort of much, which in duty they are bound to do.

V.

We cannot by our beſt works merit pardon of ſin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reaſon of the great diſproportion that is betweeen them, and the glory to come; and the infinite diſtance that is between us, and God, whom by them

we can neither profit, nor satisfie for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants: and because as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severty of Gods judgment.

VI.

Yet notwithstanding, the Persons of Believers being accepted through Christ, good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreproveable in Gods sight, but that he looking upon them in his Son is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

VII.

Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands and of good use both to themselves and to others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by Faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word, nor to a right end the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God; and yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Perseverance of the Saints.

THey whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II.

This Perseverance of the Saints depends not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the Decree of Election, from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and union with him, the Oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the Covenant of Grace, from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III.

And though they may through the temptation of Satan, and of

of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preſervation, fall into grievous ſins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incurre Gods diſpleaſure, and grieve his holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardned, and their conſciences wounded, hurt and ſcandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themſelves; yet they are and ſhall be kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Aſſurance of Grace and Salvation.

ALthough temporary believers, and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themſelves with falſe hopes, and carnal preſumptions of being in the favour of God, and ſtate of ſalvation, which hope of theirs ſhall periſh; yet ſuch as truely believe in the Lord Jeſus, and love him in ſincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conſcience before him, may in this life be certainly aſſured that they are in the ſtate of Grace, and may rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God, which hope ſhall never make them aſhamed.

II.

This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable perſwaſion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infalliable aſſurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteouſneſſe of Chriſt, revealed in the Goſpel, and alſo upon the inward evidence of thoſe graces unto which promiſes are made, and on the immediate witneſſe of the Spirit, teſtifying our Adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.

III.

This infallible Aſſurance doth not ſo belong to the eſſence of Faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being inabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without extraordinary revelation in the right uſe of ordinary means attain thereunto: And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election ſure, that therby his heart may be inlarged in peace and joy in the holy Ghoſt, in love and thankfulneſſe to God, and in ſtrength and chearfulneſſe in the duties of obe-

dience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to loosnesse.

IV.

True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation, by Gods withdrawing the light of his countenance, suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light; yet are they neither utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of Faith, that love of Christ and the Brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which by the operation of the Spirit this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which in the mean time they are supported from utter dispair.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Law of God.

GOd gave to Adam a Law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, as a Covenant of Works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatned death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

II.

This Law so written in the heart, continued to be a perfect Rule of righteousnesse after the fall of man, and was delivered by God upon mount Sinai in ten Commandements, and written in two Tables; the four first Commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

III.

Beside this Law commonly called Moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel Ceremonial Laws, containing several Typical Ordinances, partly of Worship, prefiguring Christ his Graces, Actions, Sufferings and benefits, and partly holding forth divers Instructions of Moral duties: All which Ceremonial Laws being appointed only to the time of Reformation, are by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and onely Law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away.

IV.

IV.

To them alſo he gave ſundry Judicial Laws, which expired together with the State of that people, not obliging any now by vertue of that inſtitution, their general equity onely being ſtill of moral uſe.

V.

The moral Law doth for ever bind all, as well juſtified perſons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not onely in regard of the matter contained in it, but alſo in reſpect of the Authority of God the Creator, who gave it: neither doth Chriſt in the Goſpel any way diſſolve, but much ſtrengthen this obligation.

VI.

Although true believers be not under the Law, as a Covenant of Works, to be therby juſtified or condemned; yet it is of great uſe to them as wel as to others, in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the Wil of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; diſcovering alſo the ſinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives, ſo as examining themſelves thereby, they may come to farther conviction of humiliation for, and hatred againſt ſin, together with a clearer ſight of the need they have of Chriſt, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewiſe of uſe to the regenerate, to reſtrain their corruptions, in that it forbids ſin, and the threatnings of it ſerve to ſhew what even their ſins deſerve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curſe thereof threatned in the Law. The promiſes of it in like manner ſhew them Gods approbation of obedience, and what bleſſings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by the Law, as a Covenant of Works, ſo as a mans doing Good, and refraining from evil, becauſe the Law incourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the Law, and not under Grace.

VII.

Neither are the forementioned uſes of the Law contrary to the grace of the Goſpel, but do ſweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Chriſt ſubduing and inabling the will of man to do that freely and chearfully, which the will of God revealed in the Law required to be done.

Chap-

CHAP. XX.

Of the Goſpel, and the extent of the Grace thereof.

THe Covenant of Works being broken by ſin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleaſed to give unto the Elect the promiſe of Chriſt, the ſeed of the woman, as the means of calling them, and begetting in them Faith and Repentance: In this promiſe the Goſpel, as to the ſubſtance of it, was revealed, and was therein effectual for the converſion and ſalvation of ſinners.

II.

This promiſe of Chriſt, and ſalvation by him, is revealed onely in and by the Word of God; neither do the works of Creation or Providence, with the Light of Nature, make diſcovery of Chriſt, or of Grace by him, ſo much as in a general or obſcure way; much leſſe that men deſtitute of the revelation of him by the Promiſe or Goſpel, ſhould be enabled thereby to attain ſaving Faith or Repentance.

III.

The revelation of the Goſpel unto ſinners, made in divers times, and by ſundry parts, with the addition of Promiſes and Precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the Nations and perſons to whom it is granted, is meerly of the Soveraign will and good pleaſure of God, not being annexed by vertue of any promiſe to the due improvement of mens natural abilities, by vertue of common light received without it, which none ever did make or can ſo do: And therefore in all ages the Preaching of the Goſpel hath been granted unto perſons and nations, as to the extent and ſtraitning of it, in great variety, according to the counſel of the will of God.

IV.

Although the Goſpel be the onely outward means of revealing Chriſt and ſaving Grace, and is as ſuch abundantly ſufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in treſpaſſes, may be born again, quickned or regenerated, there is moreover neceſſary an effectual, irreſiſtible work of the holy Ghoſt upon the whole ſoul, for the producing in them a new ſpiritual life, without which no other means are ſufficient for their converſion unto God.

CHAP. XXI.

Of Chriſtian Liberty, and Liberty of Conſcience.

THE liberty which Chriſt hath purchaſed for Believers under the Goſpel conſiſts in their freedom from the guilt of ſin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigour and curſe of the law, and in their being delivered from this preſent evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of ſin, from the evil of afflictions, the fear and ſting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlaſting damnation; as alſo in their free acceſs to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of ſlaviſh fear, but a child-like love and willing mind: All which were common alſo to Believers under the Law, for the ſubſtance of them; but under the New Teſtament the liberty of Chriſtians is further inlarged in their freedom from the yoak of the Ceremonial Law, the whole Legal adminiſtration of the Covenant of Grace, to which the Jewiſh Church was ſubjected, and in greater boldneſs of acceſs to the throne of Grace, and in fuller communication of the free Spirit of God, then Believers under the Law did ordinarily partake of.

II.

God alone is Lord of the Conſcience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his Word or not contained in it; ſo that to believe ſuch Doctrines, or to obey ſuch Commands out of conſcience, is to betray true Liberty of Conſcience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an abſolute and blind obedience, is to deſtroy Liberty of Conſcience, and Reaſon alſo.

III.

They who upon pretence of Chriſtian Liberty do practiſe any ſin, or cheriſh any luſt, as they do thereby pervert the main deſign of the Grace of the Goſpel to their own deſtruction; ſo they wholly deſtroy the end of Chriſtian Liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might ſerve the Lord without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him all the days of our life.

CHAP. XXII.

Of religious Worſhip, and the Sabbath-day.

THE light of Nature ſheweth there is a God, who hath Lordſhip and Soveraignty over all, is juſt, good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praiſed, called upon,

upon, truſted in, and ſerved with all the heart, and all the ſoul, and with all the might: But the acceptable way of worſhipping the true God is inſtituted by himſelf, and ſo limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worſhipped according to the immaginations and devices of men, or the ſuggeſtions of Satan, under any viſible repreſentations, or any other way not preſcribed in the holy Scripture.

II.

Religious Worſhip is to be given to God the Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, and to him alone; not to Angels, Saints, or any other Creatures; and ſince the Fall, not without a Mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but of Chriſt alone.

III.

Prayer with thankſgiving, being one ſpecial part of natural worſhip, is by God required of all men; but that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son by the help of his Spirit, according to his will with underſtanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perſeverance; and when with others in a known tongue.

IV.

Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all ſorts of men living, or that ſhall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for thoſe of whom it may be known that they have ſinned the ſin unto death.

V.

The reading of th Scriptures, Preaching, and hearing the word of God, ſinging of Pſalms, as alſo the adminiſtration of Baptiſm and the Lords Supper, are all parts of religious Worſhip of God, to be performed in obedience unto God with underſtanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear: Solemn Humiliations, with Faſtings and Thankſgiving upon ſpecial occaſions, are in their ſeveral times and ſeaſons to be uſed in a holy and religious manner.

VI.

Neither Prayer nor any other part of religious Worſhip, is now under the Goſpel either tyed unto, or made more acceptable by any place, in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worſhipped every where in ſpirit and in truth, as in private families dayly, and in ſecret each one by himſelf, ſo more ſolemnly in the publique aſſemblies,

assemblies, which are not carelesly nor wilfully to be neglected or forsaken, when God by his Word or Providence calleth thereunto.

VI.

As it is of the law of Nature, that in general a proportion of time by God's appointment be set apart for the worship of God; so by his Word in a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lords day, and is to be continued to the end of the World as the Christian Sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

VII.

This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs beforehand, do not onely observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly imployments and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the publique and private exercises of his Worship, and in the duties of Necessity and Mercy.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of lawful Oaths and Vows.

A Lawful Oath is a part of religious Worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness and judgement, solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth, and to judge him according to the truth or falshood of what he sweareth.

II.

The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence: Therefore to swear vainly, or rashly, by that glorious or dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be abhorred; yet as in matters of weight and moment an Oath is warranted by the Word of God under the new Testament, as well as under the Old; so a lawful Oath, being imposed by lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.

III.

Whosoever taketh an Oath warranted by the word of God,

ought daily to consider the weightinesse of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully perswaded is the truth: neither may any man bind himself by Oath to any thing, but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an Oath touching any thing that is good and just, being lawfully imposed by Authority.

IV.

An Oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation: It cannot oblige to sin, but in any thing not sinful, being taken it binds to performance, although to a mans own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to Hereticks or Infidels.

V.

A Vow, which is not to be made to any Creature, but God alone, is of the like nature with a promissory Oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulnesse.

VI.

Popish monastical Vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may intangle himself.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Civil Magistrate.

GOd the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil Magistrates to be under him, over the people for his own glory and the publique good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

II.

It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the Office of a Magistrate, when called thereunto: in the management whereof, as they ought specially to maintain Justice and Peace, according to the wholsome Laws of each Commonwealth; so for that end they may lawfully now under the new Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasion.

III.

Although the Magistrate is bound to encourage, promote, and

and protect the professor and profession of the Gospel, and to manage and order civil administrations in a due subserviency to the interest of Christ in the world, and to that end to take care that men of corrupt minds and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge Blasphemies and Errors in their own nature, subverting the faith, and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them: Yet in such differences about the Doctrines of the Gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, not disturbing others in their ways or worship that differ from them; their is no warrant for the Magistrate under the Gospel to abridge them of their liberty.

IV.

It is the duty of people to pray for Magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them Tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their Authority for conscience sake. Infidelity, or difference in Religion, doth not make void the Magistrates just and legal Authority, nor free the people from their obedience to him: from which Ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, muchlesse hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people, and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be Hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

CHAP. XXV.

Of Marriage.

MArriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more then one wife, nor for any woman to have more then one husband at the same time.

II.

Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed, and for preventing uncleanness.

III.

It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore such as profesſe the true

Reformed religion, should not marry with Infidels, Papists, or other Idolaters: neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoaked by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable Heresie.

IV.

Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous Marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Church.

THe Catholick or Universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the Elect, that have been, are or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head thereof and is the Spouse the Body, the fulnesse of him that filleth all in all.

II.

The whole body of men throughout the world, professing the faith of the Gospel and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any Errors everting the foundation, or unholinesse of conversation, are & may be called the visible Catholick Church of Christ, although it is not intrusted with the administration of any Ordinances, or have any offices to rule or govern in, or over the whole Body.

III.

The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan: Nevertheless Christ alwaies hath had, and ever shall have a visible Kingdome in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him and make profession of his name.

IV.

There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof; but it is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightnesse of his comming.

V.

As

As the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own Glory: so according to his promise, we expect that in the latter days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdome of his dear Son broken, the Churches of Christ being inlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition then they have enjoyed.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of the Communion of Saints.

ALl Saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head by his Spirit and Faith, although they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship in his Graces, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Glory: and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces; and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publick and private, as to conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward Man.

II.

All Saints are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the Worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, though especially to be exercised by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in Families or Churches, yet as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Sacrament.

SAcraments are holy Signs and Seals of the Covenant of Grace immediately instituted by Christ, to represent him and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him, and solemly to engage us to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.

II.

There is in every Sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes

comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed unto the other.

III.

The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them, neither doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of Institution, which contains together with a Precept authorizing the use thereof, a Promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

IV.

There be only two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Lords Supper; neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a Minister of the Word lawfully called.

V.

The Sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of Baptism.

BAptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained, by Jesus Christ to be unto the party baptized a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of his ingrafting into Christ of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life; Which Ordinance is by Christs own appointment to be continued in his Church unto the end of the world.

II.

The outward Element to be used in this Ordinance, is Water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, by a Minister of the Gospel lawfully called.

III.

Dipping of the person into the water it not necessary, but Baptism is rightly administred by powring or sprinkling water upon the person.

IV.

Not only those that do actually professe faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the Infants of one or both believing parents

parents are to be baptized and those only.

V.

Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this Ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseperably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it; or that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated.

VI.

The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administred, yet not withstanding, by the right use of this Ordinance, the grace promised is not onely offered but really exhibited and conferred by the holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of Gods own Will in his appointed time.

VII.

Baptism is but once to be administred to any person.

CHAP. XXX.

Of the Lord Supper,

OUr Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his Body and blood, called the Lords Supper, to be observed in his Churches unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth of the Sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all benefits therof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further ingagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.

II.

In this Sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real Sacrifice made at all for remission of sin of the quick or dead, but only a memoral of that one offering up of himself by himself upon the Cross once for all, and a spiritual Oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the popish Sacrifice of the Masse (as they call it) is most abominable, injurious to Christs one onely Sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the Elect.

III.

The Lord Jesus hath in this ordinance appointed his Ministers to pray and bless the Elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use, and to take and break the Bread, to take the Cup, and (they communicating also them-

themselves) to give both to the Communicants, but to none who are not then present in the Congregation.

IV

Private Masses, or receiving the Sacrament by a Priest, or any other alone, as likwise the denial of the Cup to the people, worshiping the Elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about or adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this Sacrament, and to the Institution of Christ.

V.

The outward Elements in this Sacrament duely set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him Crucified as that truly, yet Sacramentally onely they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the Body and Blood of Christ, albeit in substance and nature they still remain truely and onely Bread and Wine as they were before.

VI.

The Doctrine which maintains a chang of the substance of bread & Wine into the substance of Christs Body & Blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by consecration of a Priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament, and hath been, and is the cause of manifold Superstition, yea of grosse Idolatries.

VII.

Worthy Receivers outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this Sacrament, do then also inwardly by Faith really and in deed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death, the Body & Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the Bread or Wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the Faith of Believers in that Ordinance, as the Elements themseles are to their outward senses.

VIII.

All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lords Table, and cannot without great sin against him, whilst they remain such, partake of these holy Mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, eating and drinking Judgement to themselves.

Chap.

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the ſtate of Man after Death, and of the Reſurrection of the Dead.

THe Bodies of men after death return to duſt, and ſee corruption, but their ſouls (which neither die nor ſleep having an immortal ſubſiſtence, immediately return to God who gave them, the ſouls of the righteous being then made perfect in holineſs, are received into the higheſt Heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: And the ſouls of the wicked are caſt into Hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkneſs, reſerve to the Judgment of the great day: Beſides theſe two places for ſouls ſeparated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

II.

At the laſt day ſuch as are found alive ſhall not die, but be changed, and all the dead ſhall be raiſed up with the ſelf ſame bodies and none other, although with different qualities, which ſhall be united again to their ſouls for ever.

III.

The bodies of the unjuſt ſhall by the Power of Chriſt be raiſed to diſhonor; the bodies of the juſt by his Spirit unto honor, and be made comformable to his own Glorious Body.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the laſt Judgement

GOd hath appointed a day wherin hewil judge the World in righteouſnſs by Jeſus Chriſt, to whom all Power & Judgement is given of the Father, in which day not onely the Apoſtate Angels ſhall be judged, but likewiſe all perſons that have lived upon earth, ſhal appear before the Tribunal of Chriſt, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, & to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

II.

The end of Gods appointing this day, is for the manifeſtation of the Glhry of hes Mercy in the eternal ſalvation of the Elect, and of his Juſtice in the damnation of the Reprobate, who are wicked and diſobedient: for then ſhall the righteous goe into everlaſting Life, and receive that fulneſſe of joy and glory, with everlaſting reward in the preſence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God and obey not the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be caſt into eternal torments, and be puniſhed with ever-

lasting reward in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.

III.

As Christ would have us to be certainly perswaded that there shall be a Judgement, both to deter all men from sin, and for the great consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Of the Institution of Churches, and the Order appointed in them by Jesus Christ.

I.

BY the appointment of the Father all Power for the Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested in a Suprem and Soveraign manner in the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head thereof.

II.

In the execution of this Power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the World unto Communion with himself, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of Obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his Word.

III.

Those thus called (through the Ministery of the Word by his Spirit) he commandeth to walk together in particular Societies or Churches, for their mutual edification and the due performance of that publique Worship, which he requireth of them in this world.

IV.

To each of these Churches thus gathered, according unto his mind declared in his Word, he hath given all that Power and Authority, which is any way needful for their carrying on

on that Order in Worſhip and Diſcipline, which he hath inſtituted for them to obſerve with Commands and Rules, for the due and right exerting and executing of that Power.

V.

Theſe particular Churches thus appointed by the Authority of Chriſt, and intruſted with power from him for the ends before expreſſed, are each of them as unto thoſe ends, the ſeat of that Power which he is pleaſed to communicate to his Saints or Subjects in this world, ſo that as ſuch they receive it immediately from himſelf.

VI.

Beſides theſe particular Churches, there is not inſtituted by Chriſt any Church more extenſive or Catholique entruſted with power for the adminiſtration of his Ordinances, or the execution of any authority in his name.

VII.

A particular Church gathered and compleated according to the mind of Chriſt, conſiſts of Officers and Members: The Lord Chriſt having given to his called ones (united according to his appointment in Church-order) Liberty and Power to chooſe Perſons fitted by the holy Ghoſt for that purpoſe, to be over them, and to miniſter to them in the Lord.

VII.

The Members of theſe Churches are Saints by Calling, viſibly manifeſting and evidencing (in and by their profeſſion and walking) their obedience unto that call of Chriſt, who being further known to each other by their confeſſion of the Faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themſelves or otherwiſe manifeſted, do willingly conſent to walk together according to the appointment of Chriſt, giving up themſelves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God in profeſſed ſubjection to the Ordinances of the Goſpel.

IX.

The Officers appointed by Chriſt to be choſen and ſet apart by the Church ſo called, and gathered for the peculiar adminiſtration of Ordinances, and execution of Power or Duty which he intruſts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are Paſtors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons.

X.

Churches thus gathered and aſſembled for the Worſhip of

God, are thereby visible and publique, and their Assemblies (in what place soever they are, according as they have liberty or opportunity) are therefore Church or Publique Assemblies.

XI.

The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the holy Ghost, unto the Office of Pastor, Teacher or Elder in a Church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the Church it self, and solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, with Imposition of Hands of the Eldership of that Church, if there be any before constituted therein: And of a Deacon, that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart Prayer, and the like imposition of Hands.

XII.

The Essence of this Call of a Pastor, Teacher or Elder unto Office, consists in the Election of the Church, togethet with his acceptation of it, and separation *by Fasting and Prayer*: And those who are so chosen, though not set apart by Imposition of Hands, are rightly constituted Ministers of Jesus Christ, in whose Name and Authority they exercise the Ministery to them so committed. The Calling of Deacons consisteth in the like Election and acceptation, with separation *by Prayer*.

XIII.

Although it be incumbent on the Pastors and Teachers of the Churches to be instant in Preaching the Word, by way of Office; yet the work of Preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also gifted and fitted by the holy Ghost for it, and approved being by lawful ways and means in the providence of God so called thereunto) may publiquely, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that they give themselves up thereunto.

XIV.

However, they who are engaged in the work of Publique Preaching, and enjoy the Publique Maintenance upon that account, are not thereby obliged to dispense the Seals to any other then such as (being Saints by Calling and gathered according to the Order of the Gospel) they stand related to, as Pastors or Teachers; yet ought they not to neglect others living

ing within their Parochial Bounds, but besides their constant publick Preaching to them, they ought to inquire after their profiting by the Word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether young or old) the great Doctrines of the Gospel, even personally, and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit.

XV.

Ordination alone without the election or precedent consent of the Church, by those who formerly have been Ordained by vertue of that Power they have received by their Ordination, doth not constitute any person a Church-Officer, or communicate Office-power unto him.

XVI.

A Church furnished with Officers (according to the mind of Christ) hath full power to administer all his Ordinances; and where there is want of any one or more Officers required, that Officer, or those which are in the Church, may administer all the Ordinances proper to their particular Duty and Offices; but where there are no teaching Officers, none may administer the Seals, nor can the Church authorize any so to do.

XVII.

In the carrying on of Church-administrations, no person ought to be added unto the Church, but by the consent of the Church it self; that so love (without dissimulation) may be preserved between all the Members thereof.

XVIII.

Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted as a means of Edification, that those who walk not according to the Rules and laws appointed by him (in respect of Faith and Life, so that just offence doth arise to the Church thereby) be censured in his Name and Authority: Every Church hath power in it self to exercise and execute all those Censures appointed by him in the way and Order prescribed in the Gospel.

XIX.

The Censures so appointed by Christ, are Admonition and Excommunication: and whereas some offences are or may be known only to some, it is appointed by Christ, that those to whom they are to known, do first admonish the offender in private: in publick offences where any sin, before all; or in case

of

of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offence being related to the Church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duely admoniſhed in the Name of Chriſt by the whole Church, by the Miniſtry of the Elders of the Church; and if this Cenſure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be caſt out by Excommunication with the conſent of the Church.

XX.

As all Believers are bound to joyn themſelves to particlar Churches, when and where they have opportunity ſo to do, ſo none are to be admitted unto the Priviledges of the Churches, who do not ſubmit themſelves to the Rule of Chriſt in the Cenſures for the Government of them.

XXI.

This being the way preſcribed by Chriſt in caſe of offence, no Church members upon any offences taken by them, having performed their duty required of them in this matter, ought to diſturb any Church-order, or abſent themſelves from the publique Aſſemblies, or the adminiſtration of any Ordinances upon that pretence, but to wait upon Chriſt in the further proceeding of the Church.

XXII.

The Power of Cenſures being ſeated by Chriſt in a particular Church, is to be exerciſed onely towards particular Members of each Church reſpectively as ſuch; and there is no power given by him unto any Synods or Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies to Excommunicate, or by their publique Edicts to threaten Excommunication, or other Church-cenſures againſt Churches, Magiſtrates, or their people upon any account, no man being obnoxious to that Cenſure, but upon his perſonal miſcarriage, as a Member of a particular Church.

XXIII.

Although the Church is a Society of men, aſſembling for the celebration of the Ordinances according to the appointment of Chriſt, yet every Society aſſembling for that end or purpoſe, upon the account of cohabitation within any civil Precincts and Bounds, is not thereby conſtituted a Church, ſeeing there may be wantiug among them, what is eſſentially required thereunto; and therefore a Believer living with others in ſuch a Precinct, may joyn himſelf with any Church for his edification.

For

XXIV.

For the avoiding of Differences that they may otherwiſe ariſe for the greater Solemnity in the Celebration of the Ordinances of Chriſt, and the opening a way for the larger uſefulneſſe of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghoſt; ſaints living in one City or Town, or within ſuch diſtances as that they may conveniently aſſemble for divine Worſhip, ought rather to joyn in one Church for their mutual ſtrengthning and edification then to ſet up many diſtinct Societies.

XXV.

As all Churches and all the Members of them are bound to pray continually for the good or proſpority of all the Churches of Chriſt in all places, and upon all occaſions to further it; (Every one within the bounds of their Places and Callings, in the exerciſe of their Gifts and Graces) So the Churches themſelves (when planted by the providence of God, ſo as they may have opportunity and advantage for it) ought to hold communion amongſt themſelves for their peace, increaſe of love, and mutual edification.

XXVI

In Caſes of Difficulties or Differences, either in point of Doctrine or in Adminiſtrations, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church in their Peace, Union and Edification, or any Member or Members of any Church are injured in, or by any proceeding in Cenſures, not agreeable to Truth and Order; it is according to the mind of Chriſt, that many Churches holding communion together, do by their meſſengers meet in a Synod or Councel, to conſider and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference to be reported, to all the Churches concerned; Howbeit theſe Synods ſo aſſembled are not entruſted with any Church-Power, properly ſo called, or with any Juriſdiction over the Churches themſelves, to exerciſe any Cenſures, either over any Churches or Perſons, or to impoſe their determinations on the Churches or Officers.

XXVII.

Beſids this occaſional Synods or Councils, there are not inſtituted by Chriſt any ſtated Synods in a fixed combination of Churches, or their Officers in leſſer or greater Aſſemblies; nor are there any Synods appointed by Chriſt in a way of ſubordination to one another.

Perſons

XXVIII.

Persons that are joyned in Church-fellowship, ought not lightly or without just cause to withdraw themselves from the communion of the Church whereunto they are so joyned: Nevertheless, where any person cannot continue in any Church without his sin, either for want of the Administration of any Ordinances instituted by Christ, or by his being deprived of his due Priviledges, or compelled to any thing in practice nor warranted by the Word, or in case of Persecution, or upon the account of conveniency of habitation; he consulting with the Church, or the Officer or Officers thereof, may peaceably depart from the communion of the Church, wherewith he hath so walked, to joyn himself with some other Church, where he may enjoy the Ordinances in the purity of the same, for edification and consolation.

XXIX

Such reforming Churches as consist of Persons sound in the Faith and of Conversation becoming the Gospel, ought not to refuse the communion of each other, so far as may consist with their owu Principles respectively though they walk not in all things according to the same Rules of Church Order.

XXX.

Churches gathered and walking according to the mind of Christ, Judging other Churches (though lesse pure) to be true Churches, may receive unto occasional communion with them, such Members of those Churches as are credibly testifyed to be godly, and to live without offence.

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